

City of Cincinnati Office of Mayor Charlie Luken



2003 State of the City

*January 30th, 2003
Cincinnati Museum Center*

State of the City 2003—Focused and Forward

Good Morning Guests:

History of State of City

Introduction

This morning presents a terrific opportunity for our city. We focus, this morning, on the successes we have shared in 2002, and we will plainly acknowledge our challenges and expectations for 2003.

There is no doubt that Cincinnati, our great City, is challenged on several fronts. There is also no doubt that the Cincinnati that I will discuss in this year's State of the City is much different than the Cincinnati we had a conversation about just one year ago.

2002 was a year of fast moving change. Unprecedented. Daring. No going back.

Consider the new in Cincinnati...just in government:

- A new system with new shared powers
- A new, young, creative council
- A new city manager who has brought a new culture to city hall—a culture that emphasizes results and customer service...Thank you Valerie!
- New people running our administration at every level—people who fairly reflect, in gender and race, the diversity that IS Cincinnati. We do not hide our diversity, we do not ignore it, and we do not minimize it. We celebrate it.

The “NEW” goes far beyond structural changes.

Focus on Basic Services

There is a new recognition that with government service comes a responsibility for customer satisfaction. Our citizens are our customers. It sounds so simple, but too often in the City's past, the bureaucracy has served itself first, and citizens second.

This is a new accountability: Our quality of life index shows that we are picking up more litter, towing more abandoned cars, and responding faster to neighborhood complaints. WE ARE getting better at service delivery and customer service.

Our new quality of life index ensures that we will measure our continued improvement with objective measures that will be shared with our customers.

There are already examples that the New Cincinnati is working—when I came to office in 1999, it snowed. I received over 100 complaints about snow removal.

This year, with all the unexpected snow and cold weather, I received TWO complaints. Just two. And it is a credit to a NEW attitude that emphasizes results.

It, by the way, is also a credit to Daryl Brock, and his team at Public Services. Daryl knows that on cold and snowy mornings he will probably hear from his anxious mayor, and in my desire for results, I get on his case a bit...

Daryl...you are doing a great job for Cincinnati. Thank you to the "Slippery Road Crew."

2002 Review

2002 was also a year when our government stood up and said that we are going to take on the tough and neglected problems that have nagged at and become negative symbols for our great city.

Last year at this time I said we would:

Create a Neighborhood Development Fund—a fund to provide funding to projects in neighborhoods that bring homes and jobs to our citizens—and with the help of Council (particularly Pat DeWine and John Cranley), we created a fund, public and private, that will bring over 100 million dollars in development to our neighborhoods.

I said I would create new TIF districts that will bring millions of new development dollars to neighborhoods. Again, with leadership from council, we did it.

Vine Street Initiative/ Over-the-Rhine Recap

I said that we would attend to the problems of Over the Rhine, a neighborhood plagued by problems but golden in opportunity. We focused especially on Vine Street.

We have new facades, new housing, new cleanliness, new police patrols, and new investments. Millions in new development and service delivery.

We did not turn our backs on the neighborhood, but in partnership with the residents of OTR, we are making a difference. In this budget, there is \$4 million dollars for implementation of the Over the Rhine Plan...new energy, new resources, and new partnerships.

OTR Future—PNC Announcement

Yes, we are making a difference. I know, the media loves to do this story—get the camera and notepad, run down to OTR and find someone who says "nothing has changed" and viola—a ready made story. We all acknowledge we have only begun.

But I'm glad that not everyone engages in that kind of journalism. Some in the media have recognized the simple fact that it took OTR decades to get into this shape, and it won't get better overnight.

Take on a big problem, and you create a big target. I will not shy away from the big problems because it brings risk of criticism, or even failure.

Our city cannot afford to be timid. And when it comes to Vine Street and Over the Rhine...we are there

to stay!

And on the subject of Vine Street, this morning I announce that the City of Cincinnati has reached an agreement with PNC bank to develop three key corners in OTR...a development OVER 20 million dollars. My office has been working on this for almost a year now.

It has been a long time in the making, and some of the details are being worked out, but the project will provide new market rate housing, new retail, and should be under construction BY THIS SUMMER!

This project, while the biggest, is by no means the only...in 2003, I expect more developments of significant size to be announced.

Convention Center

I said we would expand the convention center. We recognize that the long term solution to many of our problems in and around downtown is to attract more visitors of all kinds and descriptions.

It was not easy, and I am grateful to Hamilton County officials and our Council, but we did what they could not do for over a decade. And we did it in tough economic times.

Housing Court

I said we would create a Housing Court to get after those who bring and keep blight in our City. It took longer than I hoped, and I thank Chris Monzel and Judge Guy Guckenberger. But the Housing Court is open and it will work to rid our neighborhoods of blight.

Collaborative, Justice, Citizen Complaint Authority

I said we would sign agreements with the Justice Department and with our Collaborative Partners to bring our citizens and police together around issues of security with respect.

Not only do we have the agreements, but we have a Citizen Complaint Authority up and running. A new executive director announced last week for the CCA. We have a monitor, and most importantly, we are seeing new partnerships between police and citizens as we battle our most serious and vexing problem-violence and drug dealing on City Streets.

I applaud all of our partners for their help in fighting street violence...the FOP, community groups, and Citizens on Patrol, and the groups who have come together to urge "Peace, down the Way".

Schools

And we forged a new partnership with Cincinnati Public Schools—with the leadership of Councilmember David Crowley—and we will continue that partnership in 2003—especially given the importance of the levy that will be on the ballot this year.

Transition to 2003

2002 set the foundation... put the players in place for a brighter future, spoke to our resilience and our love for our city...but let's be honest...2002 is over and I am glad.

For while we made important progress, we remained too negative, too sour, and too divided.

2003 can change all that.

2003 begins with new reasons for optimism...and hope for a rekindled pride in Cincinnati.

Look what is already on the table:

- The Great American Ballpark.
- Reopening of the Taft Museum, after an almost \$20 million dollar renovation
- The Grand Opening of the Richard and Lois Rosenthal Contemporary Arts Center. (Dick and Lois)
- The Opening of the Ted Berry International Friendship Park
- The Reopening of Findlay Market...and an almost \$20 million dollar renovation to the neighborhood around the market.
- Art Museum—Cincinnati Wing
- Countless new neighborhood developments

The mood in 2003 will be different if we are **focused** and **forward**.

We will focus on what makes our City great....

Arts

For example, the Arts...In the past year, we have entered into a historic partnership with our Arts Community. We are saying, saying loudly, to our region and to our nation “COME HERE-Our arts are second to none!” Our Arts are right here...within a few blocks of where we meet this morning.

They are not suburban...not in Northern Kentucky...They are Cincinnati.

We now partner with our Arts organizations-big and small- to bring economic development and visitors to our core and to our city.

We reach out to residents of every age, income and race who value the culture and diversity of a stellar arts community.

We ratchet up the city's partnership commitment to our Arts community in 2003—over 5 million dollars will be spent in the biennium on various arts projects.

This new commitment was accomplished in a year of unprecedented budget difficulty...further demonstrating how serious we are about supporting our Arts community.

We have no intention of allowing the Creative Class to pass Cincinnati by. We have too much to offer. In 2003 we will work to create living spaces that can house artists and provide incentives for them to settle in our inner city neighborhoods, some of which, I hope, become arts districts.

Cincinnati's investment in the arts can be used not only for buildings, but to build neighborhoods. For instance, the Art Academy, with the city putting up \$250,000 from our Art's budget, plans a new home on the edge of downtown...just a half block away from Vine Street. Imagine what over 200 artists living and working in that area can do for our Creative Class, the Over the Rhine neighborhood, and downtown.

Development and Jobs

Another great thing about Cincinnati is our ability to sustain a strong and diverse economy. Probably no greater challenge exists than keeping that economy strong, diverse, and modern.

The sluggish economy has hit Cincinnati hard... In the three years I have been Mayor we have cut over 40 million dollars from our operating budget.

I sometimes wonder what it felt like in the 90's when city income taxes grew by 5, 7, or even almost 9 percent a year.

No such luxury today. While the changes in our economy require that we be smarter and more efficient in the delivery of City services... introducing concepts like managed competition...it also requires us to be smarter and more focused in attracting new jobs to Cincinnati...without new jobs our citizens cannot provide for their families, our tax coffers atrophy, and the urban core loses its attraction and vitality.

So, we must recognize the new reality of economic development. More competitive, less reason in the age of technology to be in an environment like downtown, more area governments throwing buckets of money at Cincinnati companies to get them to leave.

In 2002, we showed we can compete.

We have successfully worked with the Fifth Third bank to move and create thousands of jobs in Madisonville...

Development, Enerfab, Single Point of Contact

A few weeks ago a friend of mine from the Cincinnati Athletic Club called, asking what the City could do to encourage the expansion of his business, Enerfab, in the City limits. Working with my staff, and the Community development Department, we successfully retained Enerfab, and sixty new jobs are coming to town.

Just like the folks from Enerfab, I want everyone to know that if they want to expand their business, if they want to bring even ONE job into the city, if they want to renovate even ONE building, or develop even ONE new housing unit in the city, they should call this number. 352-3250.

It is MY number... I promise to be your point of contact to bring jobs, housing and opportunity to the City. My expectation is, that by the end of this year, the city will have developed its own one-stop

shop for clear, courteous and concise service to anyone wanting to help us develop our City.

No one should ever say that they couldn't find one point of contact in City Hall. No one should ever wonder about an access point to city hall, and when in doubt...this is your access point.

(PAUSE)

Center City Plan/ Economic Development Task Force

In 2002 it began, and in 2003 it accelerates...the plan to put new life into our urban core.

Why is it important???

Without the focus...we bounce from project to project, without clear vision, without consensus.

This ambitious effort been described by former mayor Arn Bortz as the city's "last, best chance" for our Center City. While I do not agree with Arn's desperate characterization, I share his enthusiasm for the plan that could turn our city in a better direction.

It brings the City in partnership with our business community to say...this is our focus, and this is how we get there. The process has been embraced by all the players in economic development...and everyone who cares about our future is on board.

The ask from me today is that we all understand that, in order to accomplish the result we all want, we will ALL be asked to give up a little bit of our turf...to share the responsibility of shaping a new future for The Center City...I ask you all to help shape, and then embrace, our new Center City Plan...

It works perfectly with The Mayor's economic development Task Force, chaired by Valerie Lemmie and George Schaeffer.

It is about a new vision for our core.

Cincinnati's Streets

Last year I talked to you about Vine Street. Well, there are some other very important streets in Cincinnati too...

Glenway, Madison, Beechmont, Harrison, Colerain, Hamilton, Ludlow, Gilbert, Seymour, Montgomery, Burnet.....These are streets with history, culture, and distinction...

We showed how important they were in 2002.

We added 40 new litter pickups and street sweeping routes in Cincinnati's neighborhoods.

A Theatre on Glenway, Streetscapes on Montgomery, DeSales corner at Madison and Woodburn, Citirama funding on Queen City and much more.

We have had many successes...

But, our work is not over, as evidenced by the frank and helpful discussion at last week's neighborhood summit. We will keep the lines of communication open, and improve opportunities for interaction.

We will cheer our successes and we will learn from our failures.

City Hall's job is to help our neighborhoods stay organized, provide technical support, and capital investment in infrastructure.

For every Street in Cincinnati, there are hundreds who are working for its success. Those are the people who refuse to give up. I stand with each of them, and I will not allow our neighborhoods to lose out to blight and disinvestment.

Fire—Thermal Imaging Cameras

NOW... PUBLIC SAFETY...where over 60 percent of the City's operating budget is spent.

This year we celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Cincinnati Fire Department...the first paid and professional fire department in the country.

Now, our Fire Department provides a first line of defense in case of terrorism...something the founders of the Department could not have imagined. President Bush warned us Tuesday night about the dangers we face at home from terrorism...it is our firefighters who will be the first to respond to the unknown if terrorism strikes.

We salute our firefighters today as the first and the best.

And let's keep them first and keep them the best.

Describe thermal imaging cameras

Firefighter Nathaniel Stubblefield, Jr.

Today we re-state our commitment...first suggested by Councilman Paul Booth...to put a thermal imaging camera in every firehouse in this City.

We would be the first fire department in the country to take this important step that will make our firefighters safer, and make it more likely that they will be able to help citizens in life threatening situations.

Next month I have been asked by members of our fire department to attend the annual Firefighters Conference in Washington, DC.

I am honored to do so...and we will meet our areas legislative delegation in hopes of getting their commitment to match the commitment already made by the city in this year's budget of \$100,000.

But, on this one we cannot fail. We will get thermal imaging cameras in every Cincinnati firehouse!!!

Police—Crime/Enforcement

BUT, the greatest impediment to our success is crime.

- Here, and in spite of unacceptably high crime statistics, there is good news in how we are ridding our streets of crime and drug dealers.
- During the week of January 6th, our Police Department made 256 arrests, served 183 warrants, and recovered 17 guns from our streets. Over the course of their work since mid-November, 818 people were arrested and 51 guns were recovered.
- Members of the District 1 and District 4 Violent Crime Task Force are here today-please join me in thanking them for their hard work and bravery in fighting crime in Cincinnati. I rode with Mendoza...anecdote?
- In short, these teams **cleaned** up our neighborhoods.

2003 Clean Initiative

Today, we announce the **2003 CLEAN Initiative**.

- CLEAN is a simple strategy, because there is no magic solution that will rid our streets of crime overnight. It means:
- **Communication, Leadership, Evaluation, Allocation** of resources, and **Neighborhood** involvement
- **Communication** means this: for the first time in history, the Mayor, Manager, and Police Command Staff will communicate on a regular basis to discuss the crime statistics...neighborhoods with hot spots...police responses and issues...a mini-comp stat.... The communication also comes between all levels of justice system...judges, prosecutors, etc. This is the highest level of accountability. (Roll Call 4)
- **Leadership** is necessary not only at City Hall, but at every level in the community...council, clergy, community leaders, residents... Everyone needs to stand up and work to end the wave of violence that has rushed over Cincinnati. It must stop, and it will take leadership at all levels to curtail it.
- We will continue our **Evaluation** of our effectiveness. This year, Council and I have worked to review crime statistics on a regular basis. The Police Chief will continue to provide quarterly reports evaluating the progress of each district. If we have to make changes to how we are policing our neighborhoods, we will.
- **Allocation** of Resources is about funding our safety services. This year we have \$250,000 more dollars in Police Visibility Overtime. We provide the best level of training with our funding. We have added more officers, and we will fulfill that commitment by 2004. And the command staff has assured me that district funding will be allocated in a way that addresses the levels of crime in each district.

- Finally, **Neighborhood** Involvement is critical as well. Citizens on Patrol is working. This ties together all facets of Community oriented policing ...CPOP...police substations...and healthy cooperation between neighborhood leaders and police.

The Pendleton neighborhood is a great example of what can happen very quickly when a neighborhood, along with the city, works closely together to fight crime, litter, graffiti and drugs. This is a major shift in the way we do business—the city and the neighborhood are working together to get it done. It is true **Neighborhood Involvement**.

These initiatives are only as good as the follow through...and the partnership we need at all levels.

But let's be clear----CRIME IS THE NUMBER ONE DRAG ON OUR EFFORTS TO MOVE FORWARD...AND SO WE MUST FOCUS OUR EFFORTS, AND OUR RESOURCES, ON IT'S REDUCTION.

And we must stand with our officers who are put on the front lines to defend our security against violent crime and drug dealing. I told the Officers, the Command Staff, the FOP, and the citizens of Cincinnati that I would stand with our officers, publicly, when they use reasonable force in the exercise of their duties...I will...and City Council has said they will too.

Focused/Forward

I'm not reinventing the wheel here. These are basic city services. Clean, Safe, Invested. I said it during the budget, and I'll continue to say it because that is where we must focus.

We will continue to provide the highest quality of basic services

We will make our neighborhoods safe...the 2003 CLEAN Initiative will work.

And we will invest in our community-through the arts, through new housing, and through attracting and retaining jobs.

Making our City better won't come from motions and press conferences. It won't happen by having people write reports and plans...

Cincinnati **will** get better with **focused and forward leadership**. That is what 2003 is about. Cincinnati will be **focused** on safety and basic services-and Cincinnati will keep moving **forward** to new developments and new investments.

Conclusion: Cincinnati is My Home

You know, as we have visited the neighborhoods in 2002, I am always telling a story about how I played in that playground...or lived in that house...or worked in that graveyard or this gas station...David Pepper always looks at me as if to suggest I am making some of this up to curry favor with the locals.

Truth is, I grew up in O'Bryonville....went to high school in Evanston, had jobs in Oakley, Madisonville, Pleasant Ridge, Walnut Hills, and Hyde Park...Lived as an adult in Price Hill, Westwood and Mt. Airy.

I now live in the West End.

The only time I misrepresented myself, David, was when I was running for Congress...and I was introduced as a graduate of Elder.

I did not correct the mistake.

Plainly, this is my home. I know for all of you in this room...at one level or another...Cincinnati is your home, too.

Time to give our home a rehab...to take down the old chain link fences that have been up too long...time to brighten the place up with a new coat of paint...a big new chandelier in the front room...and we need new plumbing...our home must work better for all of us.

Cincinnati is the place...2003 is the year...let's fix up our home together...let's make it nicer for everyone.

Our home is Cincinnati...a great city.

Thank you for being here.